

Appl. No. 09/849,707
Amdt. dated November 26, 2003
Reply to final Office action of January 26, 2004

Remarks

The Final Office Action mailed November 26, 2003 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Prior to entry of this paper, Claims 1 - 26 were pending. Claims 1 - 7, 12 - 15, 17-19, and 23 were rejected. In this paper, Claims 1, 9, 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25 have been amended, and Claims 8, 16, 17 and 26 have been cancelled. No new subject matter has been added. For at least the following reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 20-22, and 24-26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicants agree that the claims are allowable and has made appropriate amendments to overcome the minor objections as will be described below.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 8, which was indicated as allowable. Claim 8 has been cancelled since the limitations of claim 1 are now found in amended Claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that claim 1 as amended is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Claim 9 has been amended to properly depend from claim 1 (which now includes the limitations of claim 8) and not to overcome any basis of rejection since it was already indicated as allowable. Claims 2 - 7 and 9 - 11 depend from claim 1, which is now believed to be in proper form for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a notice of allowance be issued with respect to dependent claims 2 - 7 and 9 - 11.

Claim 21 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 1, from which it previously depended. It is respectfully submitted that Claim 21 as amended is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

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Claim 12 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 16, which was indicated as allowable. Claim 16 has been cancelled since the limitations of claim 16 are now found in independent Claim 12. It is respectfully submitted that claim 12 as amended is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claims 13 - 15 and 23 depend from claim 12, which is now believed to be in proper form for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a notice of allowance be issued with respect to dependent claims 13 - 15 and 23.

Claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 12, from which it previously depended. It is respectfully submitted that Claim 22 as amended is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claim 17 is cancelled. Claim 24 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations from claim 17, from which it previously depended. Claim 25 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations from claim 17, from which it previously depended. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 24 and 25 as amended are in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claim 18 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 26, which was indicated as allowable. Claim 26 has been cancelled since the limitations of claim 26 are now found in independent Claim 18. It is respectfully submitted that claim 18 as amended is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claim 19 depends from Claim 18, which is now believed to be in proper form for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a notice of allowance be issued with respect to dependent claims 19.

Claim 20 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 18, from which it previously depended. It is respectfully submitted that Claim 20 as amended is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

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Claims 1 - 7, 9 - 15, and 18 - 25 are now pending in the present application. It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby. Although certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
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